

Message Text

SECRET

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44

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 PRS-01 ACDA-05 SAJ-01 OMB-01 DODE-00 SCCT-01

MC-02 ARA-06 IO-11 /074 W

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R 270858Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 735

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

S E C R E T NOFORN SOFIA 0184

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, PFOR, MASS, BU

SUBJECT: DEPT STUDY OF THIRD WORLD CONVENTIONAL ARMS SUPPLY
RESTRAINTS

REF: (A) STATE 11675; (B) SOFIA 2582

1. WE HAVE VERY LITTLE HARD INFORMATION UPON WHICH TO
DRAW IN ANSWER REF A. ARMS SUPPLY OPERATIONS ARE AMONG
THE MOST TIGHTLY HELD "STATE SECRETS" IN A COUNTRY
WHERE EVEN INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION FIGURES ARE CONSIDERED

CLASSIFIED INFORMATION
THAT BULGARIA DOES IN FACT
SUPPLY ARMS AND AMMUNITION TO THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES SEEMS
REASONABLY WELL ESTABLISHED, INTER ALIA, BY INFORMATION
PASSED ALONG BY THE TURKISH POLICE AS TO SEIZURES THERE.

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DAO AND OTHER INTELLIGENCE REPORTS REPEATEDLY NAME

THE BULGARIAN FOREIGN TRADE ORGANIZATION "KINTEX" AS THE ARMS-RUNNING AGENT AND KINTEX TRUCKS ARE PROMINENT ON THE E-5, THE HIGHWAY LEADING FROM EUROPE THROUGH TURKEY TO THE MIDDLE EAST. A RECENT ARTICLE IN THE FRENCH SATIRICAL PAPER "LE CANARD ENCHAINE" (REF B) NAMED KINTEX AS THE SUPPLIER OF SOVIET TANKS TO THE PINOCHET GOVERNMENT IN CHILE AND PUBLISHED WHAT WAS CLAIMED TO BE THE ACTUAL INVOICE FOR THAT SHIPMENT. IT SAID TOO THAT KINTEX HAD SOLD AMMUNITION TO THE PHALANGE IN LEBANON. THE BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT DENOUNCED THE STORY AS A TOTAL FABRICATION. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION TO EITHER CONFIRM OR INVALIDATE THE "CANARD ENCHAINE" STORY.

2. THE CONSENSUS AMONG FRIENDLY MILITARY ATTACHES HERE IS THAT BULGARIA IS SUPPLYING AMMUNITION TO THE PLO, TO LEFTIST FACTIONS IN LEBANON AND TO CERTAIN AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND GROUPS. THE QUANTITIES INVOLVED, AND WHETHER LOCALLY PRODUCED OR A SOVIET (OR OTHER EAST EUROPEAN) PASS-THROUGH ARE NOT KNOWN. THERE IS AN AMMUNITION PRODUCTION CAPACITY HERE BEYOND DOMESTIC REQUIREMENTS AND SA-7 MISSILES ARE ASSEMBLED HERE, BUT NO SIZEABLE WEAPON INDUSTRY. TRANSFER OF WEAPONS FROM THE BULGARIAN INVENTORY WITHOUT RESUPPLY FROM THE SOVIET UNION WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT BULGARIAN MILITARY POSTURE AND THEREFORE IS UNLIKELY. BULGARIAN WEAPONS SYSTEMS ARE DUE FOR MODERNIZATION AND UPGRADING, AND TRANSFER OF OBSOLETE EAVA MIGHT WELL TAKE PLACE AFTER NEW SUPPLIES WERE ON HAND. WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE THAT BULGARIANS ARE INVOLVED IN SOVIET TRANSFER OF WEAPONS NOT ALREADY IN THE LOCAL INVENTORY.

3. WE BELIEVE THAT ANY MAJOR ARMES DEALS ARE FULLY COORDINATED WITH--PERHAPS INITIATED BY--THE SOVIET UNION, THOUGH SMALL SCALE DEALS MIGHT BE CONSIDERED AS STRAIGHT COMMERCIAL TRANSACTIONS, PARTICULARLY IF ONLY RIFLES AND HANDGUNS ARE INVOLVED. FOLLOWING THE SOVIET LEAD, BULGARIAN POLICY STRONGLY FAVORS A WORLD-WIDE DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE. BUT WHETHER BULGARIA IN FACT WOULD FAVOR OR PARTICIPATE IN AN INTER-SECRET

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NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SUPPLIERS AND RECIPIENTS WILL DEPEND ON SOVIET INSTRUCTIONS.

4. FOREGOING CLEARED WITHNIAO.
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NOTE BY OC/T: REFTTEL A NOT IDENTIFIED.

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